[For general protective ceremonial, usually taking place in the spring and autumn, see also category 796.]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Quite A Number

291 of men still wear the Lepcha dress, though the original Lepcha head-
[177] dress—a small sugar-loaf of woven bamboo surmounted by a feather—has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan hat decorated with coral beads. Hats are only worn on fairly ceremonious occasions. Lamas, and a few of the richer and older laymen, wear the outer dress of the Tibetan lama —a thick red, purple or dark-blue sleeved garment, joined from the waist to below the knees, and buttoning from the waist to the throat.

[286] Until the beginning of this century Lepchas used to weave all their own cloth, but nowadays only a couple of women bother to weave; people wear instead ready-made and fairly shoddy clothes. These bought clothes have had one rather serious effect, to my mind; children are usually dressed in the adapted cast-offs of their elders, and the poor and thin material in the cold winter
[164] renders young children even more susceptible to colds and bronchial trouble and has probably increased the infantile mortality. Very few people over the age of ten were troubled by colds and coughs—it would seem as though they acquired, if they survived, some sort of immunity—but there was hardly one child who was not, and the most frequent request which was made to me was for medicine to relieve these complaints. Three young children in Lingthem or
● [75] the neighbourhood died of bronchial trouble during my stay there. Adults take reasonable precautions against chills, changing their clothes and taking a hot drink as soon as possible after a wetting; children who are not with older people often neglect to do so.

361 There would appear to be a considerable difference in humidity
184 and temperature between the portion of Zongu which faces the Teesta and that which faces the Talung river; the former is considerably warmer, as the cultivation of sugar-cane, manioc, and other subtropical plants shows, and it would appear that the rainfall is less. The inhabitants of the Teesta side are geographically nearer the main mule-road between Tibet and India; but it does not appear and is not believed that this propinquity with the outside world has modified the character or habits of these people in any way; they are considered to be essentially similar to the people of the Talung valley and there is constant intermarriage all through the district.

On the far side of the Talung valley the ground is excessively rough and precipitous and is to a great extent not amenable to cultivation. Although geographically outside Zongu the few settlements are administratively part of it, being attached to the bigger

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the northern, eastern, southern and central. After the anointings the pillars are stamped with a large cone made out of ground rice, called *Gett'r tho-mu.* Finally all present throw rice mixed with flour at the pillars, shouting in as loud a voice as possible *Ta-shi shu.* This ceremony is meant to avert illness from the inhabitants of the house.

Tashi chéné is occasionally performed after major repairs. Thus while we were there Katel had the ceremony performed after a new floor had been put into his house (but he had omitted to have the ceremony done when the house was first built); and Jiroong, whose house had been gutted by fire, intended to perform the ceremony when he should have completed his repairs.

Minor repairs and alterations can be performed at any convenient time, and without any ceremony. The most frequent of such repairs is re-thatching, which needs doing at least once every seven years. The reeds used for thatching are collected about three months beforehand, bent while still green, and left to dry. The necessary bamboo supports are also collected and cut to the required length and creepers whose bark will be used for fastening the bamboos are fetched from the forest. (It is technically an offence to take these creepers without paying for them; and when Pembu's roof was being re-thatched the old man who was stripping the creepers sat isolated from the other workers so that they should not be cognisant of the crime being committed. The gesture was entirely symbolical, for the old man had chosen as a hiding place a piece of ground on the side of the main path leading to the house, so that he was the first thing seen by most people arriving to work.) When all the material has been collected the house-owner decides on a day for the re-thatching and informs all his friends and neighbours.

First of all the thatch and rotten bamboo are stripped off three sides of the house and burnt; the thatch on the east side is left till the rest is completed to serve as a shelter in case of rain. Then the bamboo cross-pieces are lashed into position and the reeds slung across them; the distance of the cross-pieces is so calculated that there is a triple layer of thatch. Finally the thatch may be kept in place by bamboos fastened above it, but this is not done in all houses.

For such a piece of work as this helpers arrive all through the day and set about doing whatever job they consider necessary at the moment, without consultation or instruction, and often without

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

774 779 The reincarnated soul of a human being arises at the moment of conception and is all through life as it were the mirror image of the body it inhabits. Thus a baby's soul is as weak and feeble as its body; and it is for this reason that Lepchas always attach a [751] snail-shell round their baby's necks or wrists; it may be that the soul will be pursued by demons and will not have time enough to get back to the midriff under the heart—the normal home of the soul in waking life; the pursued soul can then creep into the snail-shell where it can hide in safety. The souls of very old people are equally feeble; but no hiding place is necessary for them as they are too tough for devils to eat. Anything which happens to the body also happens to the soul, which is aware of it a split second earlier; if the body is cut or maimed or feels any sensation, the same thing occurs to the soul; if this were not so how could we feel anything? In normal waking life a man's body and soul are only separated in the case of violent accident; if for example a man should fall from a tree the soul would make a tremendous effort to separate itself from the body, get down safely and then return to its body afterwards. If the soul falls with the body the soul will be killed and the body die; but if the soul escapes the man will fall unconscious and be later revived when the soul re-enters its house.[6]

[828] Only in sleep or through mystic practices can the soul be separated from the body during life. Madness is believed to be the possession of a demon which imprisons the soul inside the body.

793 Finally lamaism is a social organisation. The lamas (to a lesser extent the nuns) are arranged in a disciplined hierarchy. They are a section of society which performs for the whole society its religious functions; in return the rest of society should give material support to the lamas. In Tibet this social aspect is extremely important; the lamas possess the greater part of the temporal power and are also as a group an exploiting class; the monasteries own land and the peasants attached to the land are practically monastery serfs. The lower-ranking lamas also work for the benefit of those of higher rank and are possibly as much exploited as the peasants; but they have, at least in theory, the possibility of rising to the higher ranks, which possibilities are completely shut out from the laymen. In Sikkim, as far as I can learn, the social influence of the lamas is considerably less; in Lingthem the monastery as a 'legal person' owns no land; the villagers help to pay for its building and upkeep,

[6] The Lepchas only recognise fainting or unconsciousness through pain; they do not consider fainting through fear or disgust or grief possible.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

and ends up dressed in white with a bow and arrow. This is believed to fool the devil, as is the device of taking a new name for a year.

Some of the sacrificial objects are elaborate and expensive and demand several hours and a great deal of material to make. All the rituals are described in various sacred books, and when making the sacrificial objects these books are always consulted.

I think the nearest parallel to the attitude of the Lepchas towards lamaist and Mun ceremonies can be found in that of an ignorant and somewhat hypochondriac European towards germs (the devils) and vitamins (the gods). There are a number of precautionary antiseptic measures to be taken against germs: salad is washed in disinfectant, food wrapped up in cellophane, children not kissed for fear of infection, the nose held when there is a bad smell from a drain, inoculations made against the fear of various diseases at regular intervals. Psychologically these precautions correspond almost exactly to the general and regular apotropaic services, either those held for the whole community or the obligatory consultations which have to take place at the beginning of each twelve-year cycle after the third. Once a germ has got a hold the disease has to be diagnosed and various remedies applied, for some of which you call in a doctor while others are traditional. These remedies correspond to the special services held in the case of illness or misfortune, the lama being rather regarded in the light of the consultant specialist and the Mun as the purveyor of old-world and traditional remedies. To keep in good health one has to follow certain rules about ventilation and sunlight and a correctly balanced diet. For the Lepchas these precepts are replaced by the worship of the gods. It is important to worship the gods and to have plenty of vitamins but to drive away devils and to get rid of germs is emotionally far more urgent and important. Though the other-worldly aims of lamaism are on the lips of some lamas they do not seem to me to be of great emotional importance; people say 'there are fewer devils here now that we have the lamas and their books' rather as they might say 'there is less diphtheria here now that we have got the new drainage system'. Though the lamas are considered to have driven away a number of the older devils an almost equally great number of new devils have been brought in following the arrival of Sikkimese and Nepali, as new diseases have arisen from new occupations and conditions of life to replace those which have been destroyed by a stricter application of hygiene.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

dying before the age of about ten are usually said to be reincarnations of dead people whose life was cut short before it had attained its full span (for the Lepcha the normalhuman span of life is four score years) and have therefore returned to the world as a human being to finish their term of life before proceeding to their next incarnation. Although live children are so insignificant, dead ones turn into num-een *moong*, almost the most malevolent and dangerous of all devils. As a generalisation it may be said that in so far as human beings remain attached to this world after death, it is as devils, and, the younger the dead person, the more dangerous the devil he may leave behind. Even seeing dead people in dreams (unless they are climbing snow mountains, which indicates that their souls are entering heaven) is dangerous; for the simulacra of the dead are in reality the devils which caused the death.

In the case of minor physical injuries no religious cure is employed; but more serious accidents, such as falling from a tree or a high rock, are considered to be due to malevolent supernaturals and exorcisms have to be performed to avert the repetition of such injuries for the sufferer or other members of his household. If one member of a household dies a violent death the survivors should repeat annually and at the birth of each new member of the family certain apotropaic rites. It will be remembered that a propensity to violent death, like a propensity to being chased by a bear, is an hereditary taint which must be guarded against in selecting a marriage partner.

Horoscopes differ somewhat in their emotional affect from the other lamaist ceremonies. They are obligatory and implicitly believed in and have very considerable influence on the life of the person for whom the horoscope is cast. The first horoscope is cast on the third day after a child's birth; in this is determined the child's character, future employment and span of life, and also those illnesses and dangers with which he is threatened and the ceremonies that the parents must perform to avert these dangers. The second horoscope is cast at the instance of the parents and uncles before a marriage is arranged to see that the conjunction of the joint horoscopes is not endangered by unfavourable omens. This is the least compulsive horoscope of all; there are at least twelve signs in it which can be positive or negative and in by far the greater number of horoscopes the signs are mixed; only if the sign for children is entirely negative will the marriage almost always be abandoned. The third horoscope is cast when a person has completed his third, or occasionally

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHILDREN

Six-year-old girl, Pankek, with her sickle.

Four-year-old girl with her necklace with the snail-shells on, so that her soul can escape from devils. On the right the little packet with her sloughed navel-string.

[facing p. 288]

751
291
142
412
846

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

its father it is a strong presumption that the begettor of the child is the person to whom it bears so striking a resemblance.

Some time during the day and usually fairly early the child's horoscope is cast by a lama. For this the lama may be summoned to the house or the father may go to visit the lama with 14 lbs. of *chi*. The approximate hour of birth must be noted for the proper casting of the horoscope. A lama may cast the horoscope of his own child. In this horoscope will be found the child's 'sacred name', what ceremonies are necessary to be performed by the parents to avert any threatened evils and also the future career of the child. The colour of the sash given to the child depends upon the forecast of the lama; thus a baby who is going to be a lama will be given a yellow cloth, a hunter a red cloth, and so on.

A woman whom the baby will call 'aunt' ties on its wrists three threads, one black, one white, and one red to which a snail shell is attached. When the child gets a bit older and stronger the snail shell is put on its necklace. This snail shell is a refuge for the baby's soul when the baby is sleeping; for like its owner the soul cannot move quickly and if it is frightened or pursued by demons it may not be able to get back into the body in time; therefore the shell is provided for the soul to crawl into; the demon cannot pursue it there. This snail shell is worn until the baby throws it away of its own accord. The bracelets of coloured thread will be left on till they drop off; if they get too tight they will be enlarged. At the same time the child is given a little necklace; if it is a boy the necklace will have three small beads of turquoise, if a girl three small beads of coral. To this necklace is attached the child's navel-string when it sloughs off; if it sloughs off before three days have passed it means that the child will die young; but if it stays on longer than a week it is a bad omen and means that the child will probably be foolish. The sloughed navel-string is tied up into a piece of cloth and attached as a tiny packet to the necklace. It is very bad indeed if the child should lose this sloughed navel-string before it throws it voluntarily away; if it does so as soon as it is able to crawl it will go looking for it everywhere, scratching about in the ashes and upsetting the cooking stones, and will always have its eyes on the ground and be unobservant. On the third day also the child's occiput is smeared with butter and soot scraped from the bottom of a cooking-pot to make the fontanella close; this precaution is absolutely essential. I was told that the mixture is only put on once, but it was clearly visible on a child over a year old.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling. Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true, but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present he said that by means of the egg he could see a long straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is between the two. This trouble has come from some other person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated. This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the benefit of Chano's child.

The child should not go to any house where people are quarrelling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder will be particularly painful. She should not be present at the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its mother! At the present moment demons and gods are quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 If she lives until after November she will in
755 future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of
[177] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was
[466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793 We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions
754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[713] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-petalled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The efficacy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

751 777 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.

[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 783 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 751 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they
have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no
psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this
reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's
sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in
the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passion-
ate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of
restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry
if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his
wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you
should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about,
and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he
will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-
ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each
Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will
naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can
do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it
will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one
another and in course of time will give up sleeping together.
It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is
to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the
woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother,
to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time,
and while the subject is not generally discussed among
brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if
asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death of the human being. To protect small children from this danger, mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies, in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul. A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung* and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even in the remotest parts of Sikkĭm.

Sang grong mung and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes. Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house, where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her jealous husband.

Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a person, is *Mă zóm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud-* demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

[1] [see cat.116, p.78. – Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

[582] future father-in-law, the parties being often united before
583 the woman leaves her parents' roof, in cases where the payment is not forthcoming, and the bridegroom prefers giving his and his wife's labour to the father for a stated period in lieu. On the time of service expiring, or the
585 money being paid up, the marriage is publicly celebrated by feasting and riot. The females are generally chaste,
581 and the marriage-tie is strictly kept, its violation being
[584] heavily punished by divorce, beating, slavery, &c. In cases of intermarriage with foreigners, the children belong to the father's country. All the labours of the house, the field,
462 and march, devolve on the women and children, or slaves
[567] if they have them.

164 Small-pox is dreaded, and infected persons often cruelly shunned: a suspicion of this or of cholera frequently emptying a village or town in a night. Vaccination has been
● [751] introduced by Dr. Pearson, and it is much practised by Dr. Campbell; it being eagerly sought. Cholera is scarcely known at Dorjiling, and when it has been imported thither has never spread. Disease is very rare amongst the Lepchas; and ophthalmia, elephantiasis, and leprosy, the scourges of hot climates, are rarely known. Goitre prevails,* though not so conspicuously as amongst Bhoteeas,

* May not the use of the head instead of the shoulder-strap in carrying loads be a predisposing cause of goitre, by inducing congestion of the laryngeal vessels? The Lepcha is certainly far more free from this disease than any of the tribes of E. Nepal I have mixed with, and he is both more idle and less addicted to the head-strap as a porter. I have seen it to be almost universal in some villages of Bhoteeas, where the head-strap alone is used in carrying in both summer and winter crops; as also amongst the salt-traders, or rather those families who carry the salt from the passes to the Nepalese villages, and who very frequently have no shoulder-straps, but invariably head-bands. I am far from attributing all goitre, even in the mountains, to this practice, but I think it is proved, that the disease is most prevalent in the mountainous regions of both the old and new world, and that in these the practice of supporting enormous loads by the cervical muscles is frequent. It is also found in the Himalayan sheep and goats which accompany the salt-traders, and whose loads are supported in ascending, by a band passing under the throat.